United Nations A/56/PV.106

General Assembly

Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

106th plenary meeting
Monday, 8 July 2002, 11 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-Soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

Agenda item 125 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/56/999)

The President: I should like to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/56/999, which contains a letter from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly, in which he informs the General Assembly that 18 Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I should like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

> "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years."

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in document A/56/999?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 60 (*continued*)

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Draft resolution (A/56/L.80)

The President: Before proceeding further, I should like to inform members of a revision to the text of draft resolution A/56/L.80. In view of the fact that not all the candidates for the chairmanship of the Main Committees and the vice-presidency for the fifty-seventh session are known at this point, the words at the end of operative paragraph 3 of draft resolution A/56/L.80 — "at least two months before the opening of the session" — should be replaced by the words "as early as possible".

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/56/L.80, as orally revised.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Chen (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services): I should like to inform members that the adoption of draft resolution A/56/L.80 would not give rise to programme budget implications, since no entitlement to support or services would arise before the President-elect takes office as President.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.80, entitled "Amendments to rules 30, 31 and 99 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly", as orally revised.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.80, as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/56/L.80, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 56/509).

The President: Before we proceed to implement the resolution we have just adopted, beginning with the election of the President for the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, I wish to make a few remarks.

The decision we have made today will bring about a change that will have far-reaching implications for the work of not only the General Assembly, but the entire United Nations system. For the first time in the history of this world body, the President and Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly and the Chairpersons of the Main Committees will be elected well in advance, rather than at the beginning, of a session. This change does not merely represent a procedural modification, but constitutes a major step towards strengthening the General Assembly by enabling its President to play his or her role in a much more expeditious and efficient manner.

My personal experience — as was presumably the case with my predecessors — attests to the need to ensure continuity and a smooth transition between presidencies, as well as to better prepare the future President for his or her job. Although the most important period in carrying out the duties of the President is probably the first few months of the session, that is the very time during the one-year term when he or she is least experienced as President. As for me personally, the events following the 11 September terrorist attacks made it even more challenging for me to adjust to the new job, as I had to deal with a number of unexpected and unprecedented contingencies in conducting the business of the General Assembly. That experience convinced me that we should find a better way of selecting and preparing the President of the General Assembly.

The need to strengthen the role of the President has long been discussed under the agenda items entitled "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly" and "Strengthening of the United Nations system". Last year in particular, my predecessor, Mr. Holkeri, conducted a series of informal consultations on this issue, which led to General Assembly resolution 55/285, containing reform measures such as the clustering of agenda items.

Reflecting the desire of Member States to continue this process, last April I announced a plan to start a new round of informal consultations on the revitalization of the General Assembly. So far, there have been four meetings of the open-ended informal consultations, at which we discussed the non-paper by the President and reached agreement on the draft resolution that was adopted this morning. An updated version of the non-paper will shortly be distributed to Member States will be forwarded to the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session for continued discussion. I would like to remind members that the effort to reform and revitalize the General Assembly is an ongoing, long-term process, in which we need to be steadfast and patient, progressing step by step and building on past achievements.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my deepest appreciation to the facilitators for this process: Ambassador Gabriel Valdés of Chile, Ambassador Hynek Kmoníček of the Czech Republic, Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani of Singapore, Ambassador Dumisani Shadrack Kumalo of South Africa and, in particular, Ambassador Jean-David Levitte of France, who, in my absence, so successfully chaired the meetings of the open-ended informal consultations on my behalf.

My heartfelt gratitude also goes to the Chairs and members of the Regional Groups for their active participation and cooperation in this process, as well as to the Secretariat for its valuable assistance.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 60.

Agenda item 4

Election of the President of the General Assembly

Election of the President of the General Assembly for the fifty-seventh session

The President: In accordance with the provisions contained in paragraph 3 of the resolution just adopted by the General Assembly, I now invite members of the General Assembly to proceed to the election of the President of the General Assembly for the fifty-seventh session.

May I recall that, in accordance with paragraph 1 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 33/138, the President of the General Assembly for the fifty-

seventh session should be elected from among the Eastern European States. In that connection, I have been informed by the Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States for the month of June 2002 that the Group has endorsed the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, His Excellency Mr. Jan Kavan, for the presidency of the General Assembly for the fifty-seventh session.

Taking into account the provisions of paragraph 16 of annex VI to the rules of procedure, I therefore declare His Excellency Mr. Jan Kavan of the Czech Republic elected by acclamation President of the General Assembly for its fifty-seventh session.

I extend my sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Jan Kavan.

I now give the floor to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, His Excellency Mr. Jan Kavan, who has just been elected President of the General Assembly for the fifty-seventh session.

Mr. Kavan (Czech Republic): It is a great honour and privilege for me to be elected President of the General Assembly at its the fifty-seventh session. I am really very grateful to all Member States, particularly the group of Central and Eastern European countries, for the confidence they have placed in my country and in me in this election.

I would also like to highly commend the work of the current President, Mr. Han, the facilitators and other colleagues who worked tirelessly on the resolution that the Assembly has just adopted. This is truly a very important achievement that will ensure the smoother transition of responsibilities of Presidents of the General Assembly and will, of course, enable me, and all future Presidents, to be far better prepared for the demanding tasks ahead.

During my presidency I will be committed to working towards the effective implementation of the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. I will pay special attention to the foremost task of the United Nations: the maintenance of peace and security, including conflict prevention and, of course, the fight against international terrorism. I am confident that regular consultations and mutual cooperation among the principal United Nations organs are crucial for the better functioning of the Organization. I am obviously aware of the need to build on the ongoing process of the revitalization of the General Assembly.

The Czech Republic has always been a strong advocate of the notion of the United Nations, and of its values and its principles. As an active participant in drafting the Charter of the United Nations, Czechoslovakia, later the Czech Republic, witnessed the evolution of the United Nations into an institution whose role in maintaining international peace and security, in cooperating in economic, social and humanitarian areas and in promoting respect for human rights is extremely important and, I believe, irreplaceable.

With the support of the Vice-Presidents, of the Chairmen of the Main Committees and of all my other colleagues, I should like further to enhance our work to facilitate dialogue and consensus-finding in the spirit of constructive cooperation and mutual understanding. I am convinced that I can count on the experience and assistance — of which I want to make full use — of the Secretary-General and his staff. I believe that, together, we can make the work of the General Assembly much more dynamic and results-oriented, the ongoing process of United Nations reform more efficient and the entire United Nations more coherent.

Let me conclude by saying that I look forward to fruitful cooperation with all 189 — soon to be 191 — delegations of Member States in the work of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

The President: I should like once again to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, His Excellency Mr. Jan Kavan, on his election as President of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly for its fifty-seventh session. I intend to make the most of the two months remaining until the end of the fifty-sixth session to work closely with President-elect Kavan in order to facilitate a smooth and efficient transition between ourselves as well as between our staffs. I hope that that will set a good precedent not only for future sessions of the General Assembly, but also for other institutions of the United Nations system.

Mr. MacKay (New Zealand): I should like, on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States, to congratulate Deputy Prime Minister Jan

Kavan on his election as President of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. He will undoubtedly bring to that post a wealth of experience and skills and a diverse background, including the positions he has held at the very highest levels of Government. We have every confidence that he will provide the leadership and vision needed at this critical juncture in international relations and in the work of the Organization, and that he will be well placed to build on the impressive legacy that you, Mr. President, will leave from your tenure.

Mr. Huntley (Saint Lucia): On behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, I wish to join other speakers in expressing congratulations to the Deputy Prime Minister of the Czech Republic on his election to the presidency for the fifty-seventh session. I should also like to thank you, Mr. President, for your work during your tenure and to pledge the cooperation of our Group in the period ahead.

Mr. Nteturuye (Burundi) *(spoke in French)*: On behalf of the Group of African States, I wish to congratulate the President-elect of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly and to assure him that the African Group will work hand in hand with him to help him accomplish his noble task. The African Group is convinced that his political experience and his commitment — about which he spoke in his statement before the Assembly — attest to the success that he will enjoy in conducting the work of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. The African Group will do everything possible to ensure that his work is carried out under the best conditions.

Mr. Tomka (Slovakia): On behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, I should like to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Jan Kavan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, on his election to the important post of President of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. We are confident that, with his experience both in the political field and as head of Czech diplomacy, he will guide us in our future work and will contribute greatly to the enhancement of the work of the General Assembly. I should like to add that, as a representative of the sister country of Slovakia, I am pleased to see the representative of the Czech Republic elected President of the General Assembly.

Mr. Hadjiargyrou (Cyprus): On behalf of the Group of Asian States, I should also like to join previous speakers in expressing heartfelt congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Jan Kavan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, on his election to this most important post. We would like to assure him of our full support as he carries out his important tasks. We are certain that the long experience he brings to the office of the President will go a long way towards ensuring a most successful fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

The President: Before adjourning this meeting, I should like to refer to the relevant provisions contained in resolution 56/509 adapted earlier by the General Assembly, in particular to paragraph 3 of the resolution, concerning the election of the Chairmen of the Main Committees for the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

In order for the Main Committees to take the required action, it is necessary to reconvene the Main Committees during the current session. May I therefore take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reconvene the Main Committees during the current session to take the required action to implement the relevant provisions of resolution 56/509, in particular regarding the election of their respective Chairmen for the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly?

It was so decided.

The President: However, as I mentioned earlier, not all the candidatures for the chairmanships of the Main Committees and for the vice-presidencies of the Assembly for the fifty-seventh session are known at this point in time. The Main Committees and the General Assembly will therefore meet at a later date to take the required action, as provided for in resolution 56/509. Members are requested to consult the *Journal of the United Nations* for the times and dates of those meetings. It is my sincere hope that the Chairmen and the other members of the Bureaux of the Main Committees for the fifty-seventh session, as well as the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly for the fifty-seventh session, can be elected as soon as possible.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.

United Nations A/56/PV.107

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

107th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 9 July 2002, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 107 (*continued*)

High-level international intergovernmental consideration of financing for development

Draft resolution (A/56/L.81)

The President: Members will recall that, at its 95th plenary meeting, held on 11 March 2002, the Assembly decided to consider agenda item 107 directly in plenary meeting.

I give the floor to the representative of Mexico to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.81.

Mr. Aguilar Zinser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is particularly gratifying for the Mexican delegation to present for the consideration of the General Assembly draft resolution A/56/L.81, entitled "International Conference on Financing for Development", sponsored also by Venezuela, which in its capacity as Chairman of the Group of 77 and China, played a fundamental role in the final phase of the negotiations of the Monterrey Consensus; Denmark, which is currently President of the European Union; and Australia, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Japan, Macedonia, New Zealand, Norway, the Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine and the United States.

The Monterrey International Conference on Financing for Development constitutes the culmination of an important historic process that places the fight against poverty at the centre of world development priorities and of the international community's concerns. It is also the crystallization of an immense effort, because the fight against poverty is being conducted under the leadership of the United Nations and with the energetic and resolute mobilization of the entire structure of the Organization.

With that concept in mind, the idea of holding a conference on financing for development had circulated in the General Assembly Hall for decades, and was a focus of attention for many of the fine minds that have preceded us. But it is at this point in history, in a combination of circumstances determined by the current interdependence and globalization, that our collective will has made it possible to build this process in order to move forward along new paths towards the pursuit of equitable and human development on a global scale.

It has taken many years of collective effort by the community of nations, along with the support and resolve of the Secretary-General and his team, to take this first step towards placing the issue of poverty at the centre of international cooperation, thereby breaking with the old inertia and opening up significant political spaces. The United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, in association with regional development banks, United Nations regional commissions and all other relevant actors — including parliamentarians, civil society and the private sector — will now be able to harmoniously promote the comprehensive agenda of financing for development that emerges from the Monterrey Consensus. However, it will be necessary to persevere

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and make further progress. This is the beginning. In moving forward with the vision of the Millennium Summit, the great collective challenge of Monterrey will be to transform our political platform into concrete, ambitious, effective and wide-scale activities. That should take place within a framework of joint international responsibility. In adopting the draft resolution before us today, we will be taking the first step both in that process and in the implementation of the commitments and agreements contained in the Monterrey Consensus.

Mr. Vallenilla (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for Venezuela to be a sponsor of the draft resolution contained in document A/56/L.81, entitled "International Conference on Financing for Development". Venezuela participated actively throughout the process that for many years cleared the way for the holding of The International Conference on Financing for Development which finally took place in Monterrey, Mexico, earlier this year. During the final stage, my delegation had the honour of playing an even more active role, when, as the representative of Mexico just mentioned, it took over from the Islamic Republic of Iran the chairmanship of the Group of 77.

This was a United Nations conference in which Member States, international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations, the business sector and civil society as a whole played an active role in the process that led to the Monterrey Consensus. My delegation believes that all the participants in the Conference can commend themselves on results that, while not meeting the highest aspirations of all, nevertheless represent a level of international commitment that has rarely been achieved in the past.

The report of the Conference, which we are endorsing today through this draft resolution, is the next step in a new process at the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization that will lead to the next phase, which is the beginning of the implementation by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council of the agreements reached at Monterrey.

Ms. Løj (Denmark): It is with great satisfaction that I take the floor on behalf of the European Union to join the Chairman of the Group of 77 in sponsoring daft resolution A56/L.81 endorsing the Monterrey consensus. We express our sincere gratitude to Mexico, the hospitable region of Nuevo León and the city of Monterrey, which all contributed to the success of the Monterrey Conference.

The European Union is committed to the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus in order to achieve internationally agreed development goals and targets, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. The Millennium Development Goals are crucial in that context, and we believe that the Consensus represents an important step forward in reaching those Goals. Furthermore, we see the follow-up mechanism to this Conference as part of the strengthened, wider United Nations efforts in support of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, an integrated and coordinated follow-up to the United Nations conferences and summits. We look forward to an in-depth discussion at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly on how to strengthen the United Nations and on how to achieve coordinated conference follow-up. We also look forward to the contribution of the ongoing session of the Economic and Social Council in that respect.

The Secretary-General, in his capacity as the chief administrative officer of the Organization, will submit a report regarding measures taken to ensure sustained follow-up within the United Nations system to the agreements and commitments reached at the Conference, as well as regarding how to ensure effective Secretariat support within existing resources, pursuant to paragraph 72 of the Monterrey Consensus. That report will provide an important input in the ongoing United Nations reform process.

In pursuing those important goals, the European Union looks forward to continuing the constructive working relationship among all partners and stakeholders, a relationship and a spirit that so successfully paved the way for the results achieved in Monterrey.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/56/L.81. I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Chen (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services): I would like to inform members that should the General Assembly decide to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.81, by operative paragraphs 3 and 5 of the draft resolution respectively, the Assembly would endorse the Monterrey Consensus and request the Secretary-

General to include in his report to the Assembly at its fifty-seventh session on the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development, as mandated in paragraph 3 of resolution 56/210 of 21 December 2001, measures taken, as well as his proposals, for ensuring effective Secretariat support in pursuit of paragraph 72 of the Monterrey Consensus, building on the innovative and participatory modalities and related coordination arrangements utilized in the preparations for the Conference.

While the endorsement of the Monterrey Consensus may entail financial and administrative implications, it is too early to provide a specific and detailed description of those implications at this stage. The details of those implications will be contained in the report which the Secretary-General will submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

To the extent that such implications would entail additional resources over and above the existing resources approved for the biennium 2002-2003, the activities to be funded from those additional resources would be carried out only on the condition that the General Assembly provides that those resources and/or extrabudgetary resources be made available.

The President: Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that since the introduction of draft resolution A/56/L.81, Andorra has become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.81, entitled "International Conference on Financing for Development." May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.81?

Draft resolution A/56/L.81 was adopted (resolution 56/510).

The President: I now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position before action is taken on the draft resolution. Before giving the floor to the speakers in explanation of position, may I remind the delegations that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Cuba will join the consensus on this draft resolution on the International Conference on Financing for Development. However, Cuba considers that the document that resulted from that Conference reflects an imposed consensus, and that instead of commitments on financing for development, it simply includes interventionist charity, as was stated by President Fidel Castro.

The commitments and goals set in Monterrey fall well short of meeting the challenges and major problems that the developing world faces today. Instead of commitments for financing from developed countries, they simply added unfair and discriminatory conditionality. Monterrey did not even manage to achieve a concrete plan for the follow-up and implementation of the proposed objectives. Financing for development remains a large, unresolved issue on the international agenda.

In the preparatory process and in informal negotiations, the Cuban delegation firmly defended these positions. However, Cuba deferred to the Group of 77 out of unity — which is indispensable — and to enhance the negotiating position of the Venezuelan chairmanship. We heeded the urging and appeals from many developing countries, which were eager to have at the very least a document that, although with minimal scope and burdened with conditions, would make it possible to place financing for development on the international agenda.

In Monterrey, Cuba did not block the adoption of the document, request a vote on it, register formal reservations, or deliver a speech explaining its position. Cuba did not do so because this was not necessary, since the Cuban position was quite clear in the speech given by President Fidel Castro.

We must now try to take up once again the North-South dialogue with a view to proposing concrete actions and developing initiatives to continue fighting to change this unfair, exclusive and unsustainable economic order. To do this, we need optimism. But we must also have the necessary realism that would prevent the creation of the illusion that the so-called Monterrey Consensus has changed or replaced the exploitative Washington Consensus, or that in Monterrey we moved towards a more equitable international order.

Mr. Gopinathan (India): As we made clear earlier, certain domestic procedures were required to be completed before India could consider endorsing the outcome of the International Conference on Financing

for Development. The necessary domestic procedures have since been completed.

The forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in Johannesburg, is an important conference where the international community will be required to demonstrate its political commitment to achieving the goal of sustainable development. India is firmly committed to working towards the success of the Johannesburg Summit.

In that context, we believe that it is important to endorse the outcomes of the major conferences held recently. It is with a view to maintaining the momentum for the Johannesburg Summit and for the implementation of the internationally agreed development targets, including the Millennium Development Goals, that India has joined in endorsing the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position. May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 107?

It was so decided.

Organization of the work of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Chen (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services): I would like to make an announcement concerning the general debate of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. The initial list of speakers will be faxed to all missions tomorrow, 10 July.

I would like to remind representatives that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 56/468 of 1 May 2002, a voluntary 15-minute time limit should be observed during the general debate. The list of speakers was prepared on the basis of that 15-minute time limit. To help speakers in the general debate respect the time limit, a mechanism will be installed at the rostrum. Members may wish to take into account the time limit in their advice to their capitals with regard to drafting the statements.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr. Kamando (United Republic of Tanzania): My delegation would like to put a question to the Secretariat. We who are coming from our capitals expected the annotated agenda for the fifty-seventh session to be out by June. Up to now, we have not been able to secure a copy of that document. Can we get that document from the Secretariat?

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Chen (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services): The provisional agenda of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly will be issued in July, and, on that basis, an annotated agenda will be forthcoming.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.

United Nations A/56/PV.108

General Assembly

Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

108th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 17 July 2002, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Loizaga (Paraguay), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

Announcement regarding the results of the election of the Chairmen of the Main Committees

The Acting President (spoke in Spanish): I should like to inform members that the following representatives have been elected Chairmen of the six Main Committees of the Assembly for the fifty-seventh session and are accordingly members of the General Committee for that session:

First Committee, Mr. Matia Mulumba Semakula Kiwanuka (Uganda);

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), Mr. Graham Maitland (South Africa);

Second Committee, Mr. Marco Antonio Suazo Fernández (Honduras);

Third Committee, Mr. Christian Wenaweser (Liechtenstein);

Fifth Committee, Mr. Murari Raj Sharma (Nepal); and

Sixth Committee, Mr. Arpad Prandler (Hungary).

I congratulate the Chairmen of the Main Committees of the Assembly for the fifty-seventh session on their election.

Agenda item 6 (*continued*)

Election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with resolution 56/509, adopted by the General Assembly at its 106th plenary meeting, we shall now proceed to the election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly for the fifty-seventh session.

All members of the General Assembly are eligible in this election except those already represented in the General Committee, namely those countries whose representatives have been elected to the presidency of the General Assembly or to the chairmanships of the Main Committees for the fifty-seventh session.

In accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of the annex to resolution 33/138, the 21 Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly for its fifty-seventh session shall be elected according to the following pattern: six representatives from African States; five representatives from Asian States; three representatives from Latin American and Caribbean States; two representatives from Western European and other States; and representatives of the five permanent members of the Security Council.

In accordance with paragraph 16 of annex VI to the rules of procedure, the election of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly by secret ballot will be dispensed with when the number of candidates

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corresponds to the number of seats to be filled. We shall proceed accordingly.

I shall now read out the names of the endorsed candidates.

African States: Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Swaziland and Togo.

Asian States: Bahrain, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Qatar and Viet Nam.

Latin American and Caribbean States: Barbados, Ecuador and Mexico.

Western European and other States: Austria and Portugal.

Since the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled in each region, I declare those candidates elected, in addition to the representatives of the five permanent members of the Security Council.

The following States have thus been elected to vice-presidencies of the General Assembly for the fifty-seventh session: Austria, Bahrain, Barbados, Chad, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, the Gambia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Portugal, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Swaziland, Togo, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam.

I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the States which have been elected Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly for the fifty-seventh session.

With the Chairmen of the six Main Committees and the 21 Vice-Presidents elected for the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, the General Committee for the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly has now been fully constituted in accordance with rule 38 of the rules of procedure.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.

United Nations A/56/PV.109

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

109th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 23 July 2002, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Loizaga (Paraguay), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 17 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(i) Approval of the appointment of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Note by the Secretary-General (A/56/109)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): By its resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993, the General Assembly decided to create the post of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Secretary-General proposes, in the light of the provisions of resolution 48/141 set out in his note, to appoint Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello of Brazil as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for a term of office of four years beginning on 12 September 2002 and ending on 11 September 2006.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to approve the proposal of the Secretary-General contained in document A/56/109?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): By acclamation of the General Assembly, the proposal of the Secretary-General to appoint Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has been approved.

I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Moura (Brazil): The appointment of Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello as High Commissioner for Human Rights augurs well for the continuation of the outstanding work of the United Nations in the promotion and protection of human rights. For Brazil, it is an honour and a source of great satisfaction that one of its nationals should be assigned such an important responsibility.

Sergio Vieira de Mello needs no introduction. His important achievements in East Timor and at the helm of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs are only the latest examples of a long career devoted to the realization of the values enshrined in the United Nations Charter. Mr. Vieira de Mello is rightly recognized as an efficient administrator, a skilful negotiator and a committed individual. He is also known for his high moral stature and for being identified with humanitarian causes. There is no doubt that he will put all those qualities at the service of the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development.

We wish Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello every success in his new position, and we assure him of Brazil's support and cooperation in the discharge of his important mandate.

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02-48994 (E)

My delegation would also like to express its deep appreciation for the invaluable work that Mrs. Mary Robinson has done as High Commissioner for Human Rights. During her five years in office, Mrs. Robinson contributed to heightening the level of attention paid to the plight of victims of abuses and human rights violations.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Denmark, who will speak on behalf of the European Union.

Ms. Løj (Denmark): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union with respect to the approval of the appointment of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union – Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey – the associated countries Cyprus and Malta, and the European Free Trade Association country belonging to the European Economic Area Iceland, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union warmly welcomes the appointment of Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello to succeed Mrs. Mary Robinson as High Commissioner for Human Rights. Mr. Vieira de Mello has an impressive record as an outstanding United Nations diplomat. He has demonstrated a deep and genuine commitment to human rights. The European Union is confident that the worldwide promotion and protection of human rights will be further advanced under his able leadership.

Ensuring respect for human rights in cooperation with other global and regional human rights mechanisms is indeed a challenging task. Let me ensure the Assembly that Mr. Vieira de Mello has the full support of the European Union in that endeavour.

At this juncture, allow me also to pay tribute to the outgoing High Commissioner, Mrs. Robinson. During her five years in office impressive results have been obtained. The personal and professional integrity, combined with hard work, with which Mrs. Robinson has constantly fought for human rights all over the world is a model for all of us. We wish her all the best in the future, and we sincerely hope to be able to continue to benefit from her experience and her many talents in the future.

Mr. Siv (United States of America): On behalf of the United States, I would like to offer our sincere congratulations to Sergio Vieira de Mello on his selection by the Secretary-General to be the next United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. We look forward to working closely with him and with the High Commissioner's Office.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (i) of agenda item 17?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

Note by the Secretary-General (A/56/111)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Members will recall that at its 3rd plenary meeting, held on 19 September 2001, the General Assembly decided to allocate agenda item 102 to the Second Committee. Members will also recall that the item remains open for consideration during the fifty-sixth session.

As mentioned in the footnote to document A/56/111, in order for the General Assembly to take the required action, the Assembly will have to decide to consider the item directly in plenary meeting.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to consider agenda item 102 directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of agenda item 102?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 102 (*continued*)

Implementation of the Habitat Agenda and outcome of the special session of the General Assembly on this topic

Election of the Executive Director of the United Nations Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/56/111)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): In his note, the Secretary-General recalls for members that, in

its resolution 56/206 of 21 December 2001, the General Assembly decided to transform the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements into the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

The Assembly also decided, in the same resolution, that the UN-Habitat secretariat should be headed by an Executive Director at the level of Under-Secretary-General, to be elected by the General Assembly for a term of four years upon nomination by the Secretary-General after consultation with Member States.

In the light of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 56/206, the Secretary-General nominates Ms. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka of the United Republic of Tanzania for election by the General Assembly as Executive Director of UN-Habitat, at the Under-Secretary-General level, for a term of office of four years beginning on 1 September 2002 and ending on 31 August 2006.

Accordingly, may I take it that the General Assembly wishes to elect Ms. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka as Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme for a four-year term of office beginning on 1 September 2002 and ending on 31 August 2006?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr. Yussuf (United Republic of Tanzania): We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to the General Assembly for electing Ms. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka as the Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), at the level of Under-Secretary-General for a term of four years beginning on 1 September 2002.

It is our ardent hope that the General Assembly will continue to provide Ms. Kajumulo Tibaijuka with every assistance and support possible to ensure the effective implementation of all the mandated programmes and activities of the United Nations Habitat Programme.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of Kenya.

Mr. Kahende (Kenya): The delegation of Kenya is also taking the floor to congratulate Ms. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka on her election as Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

Kenya, as the host of UN-Habitat, has noted the excellent manner in which Ms. Kajumulo Tibaijuka has been handling her work. The recent elevation of UN-Habitat to the status of programme is proof both of Ms. Kajumulo Tibaijuka's ability and of the importance attached to the work of UN-Habitat. My delegation takes this opportunity as the host of that organization to pledge continuing support both to UN-Habitat and to Ms. Kajumulo Tibaijuka.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 102.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

(a) Draft resolution (A/56/L.82)

(b) Draft decision (A/56/L.83)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Members will recall at its 3rd plenary meeting, held on 19 September 2001, the General Assembly decided to allocate sub-item (b) of agenda item 119 to the Third Committee. Members will also recall that the sub-item remains open for consideration during the fifty-sixth session.

As mentioned in the footnotes to documents A/56/L.82 and A/56/L.83, in order for the General Assembly to take action on the proposals contained in those documents, the Assembly will have to decided to consider the sub-item directly in plenary meeting.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to consider sub-item (b) of agenda item 119 directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 119?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 119 (*continued*)

Human rights questions

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Draft resolution (A/56/L.82)

Draft decision (A/56/L.83)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Denmark to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.82.

Ms. Løj (Denmark): On behalf of the European Union, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution sponsored by the European Union and Mexico, entitled "Accreditation and participation of non-governmental organizations in the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities". The draft resolution is contained in document A/56/L.82.

I am pleased to inform the Assembly that, in addition to the countries mentioned in the document, Canada, Croatia, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, and Suriname would also like to join the list of sponsors.

The draft resolution before us reflects the outcome of constructive open-ended consultations with all delegations. I would like to express my gratitude to all those delegations that took an active part in the shaping of this draft resolution.

The sponsors would like to underline the importance and necessity of the participation of non-governmental organizations in the Ad Hoc Committee. It is the hope of the sponsors that this draft resolution can facilitate the accreditation process and participation of the non-governmental organizations in the future sessions of this Ad Hoc Committee.

It is the hope of the sponsors of this draft resolution that the present text will be adopted by consensus.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mexico.

Ms. Olamendi Torres (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are very pleased to be joining the European Union in sponsoring draft resolution A/56/L.82, which has also been sponsored by a number of other countries. I wish to say that, for Mexico, the accreditation and participation of non-governmental organizations in the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities will without doubt be a great achievement of the Assembly. As we have stressed, the draft resolution now before the Assembly is very important because it confirms that non-governmental organizations enjoying consultative status with the Economic and Social Council have a right to participate in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee. The draft resolution also facilitates participation by other organizations.

Also, the draft resolution urges relevant United Nations bodies to provide financial assistance to those organizations that lack the resources necessary to participate, in particular those from developing countries, on the basis of the establishment of criteria for transparency and equality in the allocation of such assistance.

As well, the Secretary-General is requested to disseminate to non-governmental organizations information on accreditation procedures. The Assembly would also decide that the specific modalities of this participation will be decided by the Ad Hoc Committee during the first week of its session.

Non-governmental organizations working in favour of rights and equal opportunities for persons with disabilities and organizations composed of persons with disabilities have played an essential role in promoting and creating awareness on this important issue. Through their local, national, regional and global networks, they have made very valuable contributions to the international community in many areas related to the defence and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities. Their contribution is indispensable, because we want the convention to provide viable responses to meet the situation and the needs of persons with various kinds of disabilities, whose circumstances may vary from country to country or region to region.

For that reason, and because the convention should have a comprehensive and integral approach,

and pursuant to General Assembly resolution 56/168, the Ad Hoc Committee must have as many views of the issue as possible.

Accordingly, my country would invite all General Assembly members to adopt the draft resolution before us. We believe that the process that will begin in a few days to prepare a convention will be further enriched. Above all, we will be able to include those actors who ultimately are the ones who will benefit most from what will, no doubt, be the successful outcome of the Ad Hoc Committee's work.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of the United States to introduce draft decision A/56/L.83.

Mr. Rabby (United States of America): In response to a generous request by Mexico and Canada, the United States, as an additional main sponsor of draft decision A/56/L.83, is pleased to introduce that draft decision, entitled "Participation of persons with disabilities in the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities". By this draft decision, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to make reasonable efforts, within existing resources, to facilitate the full and equal participation in the deliberations of the Ad Hoc Committee by persons with disabilities and would suggest various ways by which people with disabilities might be accommodated during the sessions of the Committee.

The Ad Hoc Committee will be considering proposals for an international convention to protect and promote the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. It is important to recognize that talk of equal rights and opportunities for the disabled and their full participation in society is meaningless unless the international community is willing, at the same time, to adopt a flexible approach to its "normal" practices and to make the reasonable accommodations necessary to enable people with disabilities to actually play their part and make their contribution. Many people with disabilities either require very little, if anything, in the way of accommodation, or make whatever special arrangements they need themselves. However, some severely disabled persons may require special arrangements and, in their case, we should do our utmost to be as receptive and inclusive as possible so that they may be full and equal partners in our work.

Therefore, although this draft decision may at first glance seem procedural in nature, it is in a very real sense substantive and particularly germane to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee. It is our hope that whatever reasonable efforts are made to accommodate persons with disabilities in the meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee will soon be adopted routinely at all United Nations meetings.

The United States is grateful to Mexico and Canada for sponsoring this draft decision and for having immediately embraced its objectives and approach. Since the submission of the draft decision to the Secretariat, the following States have added their names to the list of sponsors: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, the Sudan, Sweden the United Kingdom and my own country, the United States.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/56/L.82 and draft decision A/56/L.83.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. Kam: I should like to inform members of the Assembly that the adoption of draft decision A/56/L.83 will have no programme budget implications, on the understanding that persons with disabilities wishing to participate in the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities inform the Secretariat of their intention to participate sufficiently well in advance so as to enable the Secretariat to inform those participants of the special services that are currently available and that could be provided to them during the meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Roshdy (Egypt): My delegation joined others in the informal consultations leading to the current formulation of draft resolution A/56/L.82. We were keen to attend as many meetings as possible since the process began, because we attach great importance to the issue of disability and the rights of people living with disabilities.

My delegation, as well as many others, presented many amendments to the draft resolution that is before

us for consi
deration. Unfortunately, most of them were
not reflecte
d in the draft resolution. I would hesitate to
say that th
y were ignored, but that is a fact. And I
would like
to register our strongest objection to the
process th
it led to the formulation of this draft
resolution.

We n
ow have two options between which to
choose: eit
er to accept it as it is and have this repeated
as a preced
ent in the future; or to put it to the vote. It
would not
e a very good omen to start the process by
taking a vo
e. We are very committed to and supportive
of this proc
ess.

Not e
verybody in this building who is trying to
regulate
non-governmental organization (NGO)
participati
on is against NGO participation in the work
of the Uni
ted Nations. Not everybody who is proposing
a framew
rk or trying to make clear what NGOs are
coming h
ere to do is against NGOs. Even if some
parties w
uld like to label it that way, it is not our
concern,
because we know that we are not against
NGO part
icipation.

But
we will not block consensus on the draft
resolution
. Those are the instructions that I have in the
light of t
e friendly relations between my country and
Mexico,
a friendly country that has devoted a lot of
time and
energy to this process for the past year. To
show app
reciation for the Mexican efforts, we will join
consensu
s on draft resolution A/56/L.82. However, we
would lik
e this statement to be recorded in the official
records o
f the meeting. The process can now begin. We
will see i
n the course of action who was really attached
to the pr
ocess and who was not, and who wanted to
destroy i
procedurally.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will first take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.82, entitled "Accreditation and participation of non-governmental organizations in the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities".

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/56/L.82 was adopted (resolution 56/510).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft decision A/56/L.83, entitled "Participation of persons with disabilities in the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities".

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 119.

The meeting rose at 3.50 p.m.

United Nations A/56/PV.110

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

110th plenary meeting
Thursday, 15 August 2002, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Kamara (Sierra Leone), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Adoption of the agenda of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly and organization of work: request for the reopening of the consideration of agenda item 21 (j)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/56/1024)

The Acting President: I should like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to a note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/56/1024. As indicated in the footnote that document, in order for the General Assembly to consider the note, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of sub-item (j) of agenda item 21, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity".

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to reopen consideration of sub-item (j) of agenda item 21?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Members will recall that at its 3rd plenary meeting, held on 19 September 2001, the General Assembly decided to consider sub-item (j) of agenda item 21 directly in plenary meeting. In order for the General Assembly to take action expeditiously on the present note, may I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of sub-item (j) of agenda item 21?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 21 (*continued*)

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

(j) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity

Note by the Secretary-General (A/56/1024)

The Acting President: May I take it that the General Assembly, having considered the note by the Secretary-General, decides that the African Union will assume the rights and responsibilities of the Organization of African Unity as an observer invited in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2011 (XX) and the cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: In this connection, I should like to recall that, in the provisional agenda of the fifty-seventh session (document A/57/150), the title of the sub-item appears as "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity". In view of the decision just taken by the General Assembly, may I take it that the Assembly wishes to

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02-52442 (E)

change the title of the sub-item to "Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union"?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the African Union.

Mr. Ngugu (African Union) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to convey to you, Sir, our great satisfaction at seeing you preside over the current meeting.

Now that the General Assembly has adopted a decision on the African Union, I would like, on behalf of Mr. Amara Essy, Interim Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, to convey our gratitude to the General Assembly for the support it has just voiced to our organization. The African Union was born on 9 July 2002, with the praiseworthy objectives enshrined in the Constitutive Act. The African Union will rely on its own potentials to attain those objectives, and, in particular, on the sincere cooperation that should exist with its partners. We hope that cooperation will be very fruitful.

This is an important moment for us. A new, hope-filled era is beginning. We believe that, through the ambitious programme adopted by the African Union with the participation of the Members of the United Nations, we will be able to achieve the hopes of Africans within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (j) of agenda item 21?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 22 (*continued*)

Final review and appraisal of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s

Draft resolution (A/56/L.84)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.84.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): Today is indeed a historic day for us from the African continent, as the Organization of African Unity is being replaced in this Hall by the African Union. I have the pleasure to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.84. I would like to begin by stating that in addition to the sponsors that appear on the draft resolution — Azerbaijan, Belgium, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt and South Africa — this draft resolution is also sponsored by the following countries: Algeria, Austria, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Kuwait, Lesotho, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom.

This draft resolution dates back to resolution 56/218, of 21 December 2001, in which it was decided that a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly would be held on 16 September 2002 to consider how to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). At the time that resolution was discussed, there was a possibility of our having two days for this high-level event. But, following consultations and negotiations, 16 September is the only day that we have for the high-level event in support of NEPAD.

Because of the fact that this is to be a one-day event, we have faced the tremendous challenge of trying to accommodate all Member States wishing to participate in the debate that will be held on 16 September 2002. In the end, we have come up with a draft resolution that we believe enjoys consensus among many Member States. The draft resolution would decide to hold a high-level meeting on 16 September 2002 to consider how to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development. That session would consist of two plenary meetings, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Together with those two plenary meetings, there would also be a separate informal panel.

The speakers' list for the debate in the plenary meetings shall be organized on a first-come-first-served basis, and the order of precedence shall be heads of State or Government, vice-presidents, crown princes and princesses, deputy prime ministers, the highest-ranking officials of the Holy See and Switzerland — in their capacities as observer States — Palestine — in its capacity as an Observer — ministers, vice-ministers, chairmen of delegations and everyone else representing their country. However, because it is to be a one-day meeting, we decided to adopt a formula that would ensure that we could take advantage of the presence of heads of State or Government who will be

here for the fifty-seventh session, as well as of the ministers expected to attend the session.

In addition, if I may digress for a moment, the speakers' list will not be open until 10 September, in order to be fair to many of our colleagues who are not here or who are or who are on vacation. That will allow us to open up the speakers' list with everyone in town, so that no one will have an added advantage or disadvantage.

The draft resolution would also decide that the informal panel would be held parallel with the afternoon plenary meeting, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. The panel's theme would be "The international community's partnership with the New Partnership for Africa's Development". The draft resolution would further decide that the informal panel would be made up of five panellists, namely, the heads of State of the five initiating countries of the New Partnership for Africa's Development: the Presidents of Nigeria, South Africa, Algeria, Senegal and Egypt. The draft resolution would further decide that, at the end of the debate in the plenary meetings, the Head of State of Nigeria would orally present to the General Assembly a summary of the discussion in the informal panel.

The formula we have come up with is one that we believe suits the concerns and needs of many delegations. We ask the Assembly to endorse it by consensus.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.84, entitled "Organization of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to consider how to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development".

The following delegations have become additional sponsors of the draft resolution: the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, China, the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Iceland, Madagascar, Mongolia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Sierra Leone, Sweden, the Syrian Arab Republic, Togo and the United States.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.84?

Draft resolution A/56/L.84 was adopted (resolution 56/511).

The Acting President: I should like to inform members that the list of speakers in the debate at the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to consider how to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development, to be held on 16 September, will be opened at the start of the fifty-seventh session.

The General Assembly has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of agenda item 22.

Agenda item 63

Armed aggression against the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Letter dated 31 July 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/56/1020)

The Acting President: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting, held on 19 September 2001, the General Assembly included item 63 on the agenda of the fifty-sixth session. In connection with this item, I should like to draw the attention of members to document A/56/1020, which contains the text of a letter dated 31 July 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly, in which it is requested that the item entitled "Armed aggression against the Democratic Republic of the Congo" be included in the agenda of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item, and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 63.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.

United Nations A/56/PV.111

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

111th plenary meeting
Friday, 6 September 2002, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 125 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Letter dated 4 September 2002 from the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly (A/56/999/Add.1)

The President: I should like just to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/56/999/Add.1. In the letter contained in that document, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his letter contained in document A/56/999, Uzbekistan has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in that document?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 49 (*continued*)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council (A/56/47)

Draft decision (A/56/47, paragraph 26)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held a debate on this item at its 33rd to 36th plenary meetings, from 30 October to 1 November 2001.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision contained in paragraph 26 of the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: I should like to express sincere thanks to Ambassador Thorsteinn Ingólfsson of Iceland and Ambassador Mignonette Patricia Durrant of Jamaica, the two Vice-Chairpersons of the Open-ended Working Group, who have so ably conducted the discussions and complex negotiations of the Working Group. I am sure that members of the Assembly will join me in extending to them our sincere appreciation.

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02-58053 (E)

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 49?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 175

Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula

Letter dated 22 August 2002 from the Permanent Representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/56/1029)

The President: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting, held on 19 September 2001, the General Assembly included item 175 on the agenda of the fifty-sixth session.

In connection with this item, I should like to draw the attention of members to document A/56/1029, which contains a letter dated 22 August 2002 from the Permanent Representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea in which it is requested that the item entitled "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula" be included in the agenda of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The President: That concludes our consideration of agenda item 175.

Agenda item 17 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(e) Appointment of members of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal

The President: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting, held on 19 September 2001, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session. Members will further recall that item (e) is included in the provisional agenda of the fifty-seventh session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of this sub-item and of item 17 as a whole?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 47

The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti

The President: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting, held on 19 September 2001, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session. Members will also recall that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/285, of 7 September 2001, the item shall be considered biennially starting at the fifty-sixth session.

May I thus take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 47?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 58

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

The President: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting, held on 19 September 2001, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session. Members will also recall that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/285, of 7 September 2001, the item shall be considered biennially starting at the fifty-sixth session.

May I thus take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 58?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 59 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the United Nations system

The President: Members will recall that, at its 91st plenary meeting, held on 21 December 2001, the Assembly adopted decision 56/455 under this item.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to include this item in the draft agenda of its fifty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The President: That concludes our consideration of agenda item 59.

Agenda item 60 (*continued*)

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

The President: Members will recall that, at its 91st plenary meeting, held on 21 December 2001, the Assembly adopted decision 56/455 under this item, and that at its 106th plenary meeting, held on 8 July 2002, the Assembly adopted resolution 56/509, also under this item.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to include this item in the draft agenda of its fifty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The President: That concludes our consideration of agenda item 60.

Agenda item 61

Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields

The President: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting, held on 19 September 2001, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session. Members will also recall that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/285, of 7 September 2001, the item shall be considered biennially starting at the fifty-sixth session.

May I thus take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of this item?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 62

Question of Cyprus

The President: Members may recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting, held on 19 September 2001, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session but deferred a decision on the allocation of the item to an appropriate time during the session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. May I take it, then, that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer its consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The President: That concludes our consideration of agenda item 62.

Agenda item 129

Improving the financial situation of the United Nations

The President: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting, held on 19 September 2001, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The President: That concludes our consideration of agenda item 129.

Agenda item 140

Financing of the United Nations Mission in East Timor

The President: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting, held on 19 September 2001, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The President: That concludes our consideration of agenda item 140.

Agenda item 143

Financing of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan

The President: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting, held on 19 September 2001, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The President: That concludes our consideration of agenda item 143.

Agenda item 145

Financing and liquidation of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia

The President: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting, held on 19 September 2001, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The President: That concludes our consideration of agenda item 145.

Agenda item 148

Financing of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique

The President: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting, held on 19 September 2001, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The President: That concludes our consideration of agenda item 148.

Agenda item 152

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia

The President: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting, held on 19 September 2001, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The President: That concludes our consideration of agenda item 152.

Agenda item 153

Financing of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda

The President: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting, held on 19 September 2001, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The President: That concludes our consideration of agenda item 153.

Agenda item 157

Financing of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic

The President: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting, held on 19 September 2001, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The President: That concludes our consideration of agenda item 157.

Announcement

The President: Before adjourning the meeting, I should like to remind members that the closing meeting of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly will take place on Monday, 9 September 2002 at 3 p.m. in the newly decorated General Assembly Hall.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.

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General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

112th plenary meeting

Monday, 9 September 2002, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 10 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization

Draft resolution (A/56/L.85)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.85, entitled "Prevention of armed conflict".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.85?

Draft resolution A/56/L.85 was adopted (resolution 56/ 512).

The President: I should like to express sincere thanks to Ambassador Pierre Schori, Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations, and to Ambassador Stig Elvemar of the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations for conducting the open-ended informal consultations.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 10?

It was so decided.

Agenda items remaining for consideration during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly

The President: I should like to remind delegations that the following agenda items, on which action has been taken at previous meetings, have remained open for consideration during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly: items 11, 12, 15, 19, 20, 22, 26, 29, 40 to 44, 50, 51, 96, 98, 102, 109, 112, 119 to 128, 130 to 139, 141, 142, 144, 146, 147, 149 to 151, 154 to 156, 158, 166 and 169.

As members are aware, those items, with the exception of item 122, entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001", have been included in the provisional agenda of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly considers that discussion of those items at the present session is concluded?

It was so decided.

Closing statement by the President

The President: We have now come to the end of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, and it is time for me to declare the session closed. As we look back over the past year, I am sure we are all overwhelmed and humbled by a flood of thoughts and emotions. Words such as "extraordinary", "unusual" or "unprecedented" have been used to characterize our session, so much so that they have become clichés by now. I have been deeply honoured and privileged to serve as President of the General Assembly during this unique and eventful year of great accomplishments for the United Nations. Allow me to share with members some of my thoughts on this occasion.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

02-58059 (E)

Our session began in a state of crisis triggered by the most atrocious acts of terrorism in history. My term as President was to start on 11 September 2001, a date now etched in everyone's memory for a very different reason and because of a very different event. Under serious security threats to the United Nations Headquarters building itself, I had urgent consultations with Secretary-General Kofi Annan. We decided to open the General Assembly the next day, on 12 September. Directly after my assumption of the presidency, the General Assembly adopted its first resolution of the session, resolution 56/1, condemning strongly the terrorist attacks and calling for international cooperation to eradicate terrorism.

The three months following that day turned out to be one of the most extraordinary and demanding periods in the annals of the General Assembly. We had to reorganize virtually all of our work programme. We devoted one whole week of our debate to measures to combat terrorism, during which the Mayor of New York City was invited to speak for the first time at the United Nations. We also held a two-day meeting on the theme of Dialogue among civilizations to promote inter-cultural understanding, which had particular relevance in the context of our pressing concern with terrorism.

Terrorism also topped the agenda of the general debate, which was held in November, two months later than usual, over a period of only seven days but still with the participation of 187 delegations, including 41 heads of State or Government. Joined in the view that international terrorism constitutes a threat to international peace and security as well as a crime against humanity, Member States underscored the key role to be played by the United Nations in intensifying international efforts to eliminate terrorism. Many also cautioned that the fight against terrorism should not be connected with any religion or ethnicity.

The heightened awareness of the nature and threat of terrorism has been paralleled by progress in strengthening the legal framework against terrorism, especially through the work of the Sixth Committee. The Assembly has accelerated work with a view to an early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. At the same time, I have urged Member States that have not yet done so to become parties, as a matter of priority, to the existing international conventions relating to terrorism. I hope that the momentum we have created will be built upon during the next session so that the remaining questions can be resolved towards the establishment of a more effective legal framework to root out terrorism.

Also high on our agenda has been the question of Afghanistan. The General Assembly has taken coordinated measures with the Security Council to restore peace and security in that war-ravaged nation and to assist in its reconstruction. We welcomed the establishment of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and warmly appreciated the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative to promote peace and security in that country. We have responded promptly and concretely to the need of the Afghan people for massive humanitarian assistance as well as for support in their post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

Thus coping with the new challenges, we have also been steadfast in furthering important work already begun. Being the first session of the General Assembly after the historic Millennium Assembly of 2000, our meetings made major advances in the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration. Noting with appreciation the road map report of the Secretary-General (A/56/326), the Assembly recommended that it be considered a useful guide in the implementation of the Declaration by the United Nations system, and requested the Secretary-General to prepare annual as well as five-year comprehensive reports on progress achieved towards implementing the Declaration.

In that regard, I called upon Member States to sustain the political will of the Millennium Summit and to take comprehensive and balanced measures to turn the goals of the Millennium Declaration into reality. The implementation of the Declaration can be effective only through the participation of and cooperation among all actors, including States, the United Nations system, other international and regional organizations and civil society.

On the economic front, too, it has been a challenging time for us. With much of the global attention focused on the fight against terrorism, and with the world economy moving perilously close to another recession, we still managed to make progress in a number of important areas. In particular, we have moved forward in our pursuit of development. There have been major events and actions towards the implementation of the millennium development goals.

In the process, the Assembly has maintained its focus on, among other things, the eradication of poverty.

The momentum generated by the Millennium Summit has been preserved through major United Nations meetings on development held in and outside New York, such as the International Conference on Financing for Development, in March; the meeting of the General Assembly devoted to information and communication technologies for development, in June; and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held earlier this month. By addressing the critical issues of development financing, the digital divide and sustainable development, respectively, those landmark gatherings have made vital contributions to the international community's endeavours to achieve economic and social development objectives.

In that regard, I have accorded particular priority to the issue of development of Africa. African development — a common element that cuts across the issues of poverty eradication, HIV/AIDS, sustainable development and conflict prevention — has become one of the most daunting challenges of our time. It is in this context that, last April, I visited four West African countries: Ghana, Sierra Leone, the Gambia and Senegal. During those visits, I reaffirmed the strong support of the United Nations system for the efforts of African countries to promote economic and political development, and I exchanged views with their leaders on finding better ways and means to realize our common goals.

This year, with the final review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s under way, we have welcomed the New Partnership for Africa's Development, on which a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly will be held next week. Learning from the lessons of the New Agenda, we have renewed our commitment to promoting African development in all its aspects. In a related development, the Assembly's decision last year to create the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States should be considered a major step forward in advocating the cause of the least developed countries.

Our achievements have been no less substantial in the area of human rights and social issues. Postponed in the aftermath of 11 September, the special session on children, held in May this year, proved to be a historic gathering of world leaders to reaffirm their commitment to building a world fit for children. At the opposite end of the age spectrum, the Second World Assembly on Ageing produced a Plan of Action that will guide our efforts to meet the challenges of ageing populations and their far-reaching socio-economic consequences.

In these and other endeavours of the United Nations, civil society has become an increasingly important partner. Multi-stakeholder participation has now become established practice in areas as diverse as health and immunization, the rights and well-being of children and the harnessing of information and communication technologies for development. I would like to express my satisfaction at the Assembly's growing recognition of the instrumental contributions of non-governmental organizations and civil society in general to our work in the economic, social and related fields.

Meanwhile, we have taken a great step forward in reforming the United Nations, with a small but significant change. Through a series of informal meetings of the Assembly, we were able to amend the relevant rules of procedure of the General Assembly in order to elect the President and other officials at least three months before the beginning of a new session. This change does not merely represent a procedural modification; it is designed to ensure a more efficient transition and continuity between successive presidencies, and thus facilitate and strengthen the role of the President of the General Assembly.

In accordance with the new rules, the former deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Jan Kavan, was elected as my successor, and the Assembly also elected the 21 vice-presidents and the six Main Committee chairpersons for the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. Since then, I have met with President-elect Kavan, as have our two cabinet teams, in many consultations covering all issues relating to our transition. Indeed, this has been the first substantive transition process for the presidency, and it should set a precedent for future sessions of the General Assembly and other bodies in the United Nations system.

We have also deliberated the issue of Security Council reform through the Open-ended Working Group on that matter, which met in four sessions from February to July this year. Now in its ninth year, the

Working Group has made some progress in the area of the working methods of the Security Council. The more difficult area of membership expansion has not seen much change, except for the addition of a few new proposals. More active debate is expected during the tenth year of the Working Group.

On a day-to-day level, I have endeavoured to improve the way in which we conduct the business of the General Assembly. To make our meetings more efficient — especially when they had to be shortened and condensed because of the contingencies of last year — I called for punctuality with time and parsimony with words on the part of everyone. I kept my door open at all times and met with as many people as I could. I also consulted as often as possible with the President of the Security Council and the President of the Economic and Social Council, as well as the chairpersons of regional groups.

As we look back on the fifty-sixth session, the magnitude and intensity of our work are reflected in the numbers. We have dealt with 173 agenda items, held 112 plenary meetings and adopted 359 resolutions and 107 decisions. We also held a special session and three rounds of the resumed emergency special session, at which a total of five resolutions and nine decisions were adopted.

As President of the General Assembly, I paid official visits to 12 countries. They are, in the order in which I visited them: Ghana, Sierra Leone, the Gambia, Senegal, East Timor — on the occasion of its independence, together with the Secretary-General — Japan, Italy, the Holy See, Austria, the Czech Republic, Australia and Singapore. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the respective Governments once again for their cooperation and hospitality. I also visited the United Nations Offices in Geneva and in Vienna, as well as United Nations peacekeepers in the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone.

In reviewing the past year, however, it would not be fair for me to fail to mention the tasks that remain unfinished and that need to be dealt with on a continuing basis by my successors. These include, among others, measures to eliminate terrorism, prevent conflict, ensure Security Council reform and revitalize the General Assembly. With regard to that last item in particular, I believe that greater consideration should be given to ways to strengthen and institutionalize the role of the President of the General Assembly, in terms not only of the Assembly but also of United Nations meetings held away from Headquarters. We must also heed the views of some Member States that the recent surge of mega-conferences held outside United Nations bodies proper could end up marginalizing the latter and could thus run counter to our goal of strengthening and revitalizing the role of the major United Nations organs.

The world today is certainly a very different place from the world that gave birth to the United Nations 57 years ago, in the aftermath of the Second World War. There have been many changes, of which I would like to mention three that directly relate to the future of our world body.

First, the field of international relations is becoming increasingly crowded, with more and more actors. The membership of the United Nations has grown from 51 in 1945 to 189 today. The increase is continuing even now, as we will shortly welcome two new Members: Switzerland and East Timor. Furthermore, compared with the initial lot of 51 Members, the current membership of the United Nations comprises a much wider spectrum in terms of political, economic, social and cultural backgrounds. Accordingly the dynamics of the world body has changed dramatically. At the same time, non-State actors, such as international, regional and non-governmental organizations, have also become important players.

Secondly, the world is no longer ideologically divided by the cold war, which had been the dominant feature of international relations during the second half of the twentieth century. In the post-cold-war era, the United Nations has come to play an expanding role in restoring and maintaining peace. Once introduced to fill the gap between the idea of collective security and the reality of unimplemented Charter provisions, United Nations peacekeeping operations have evolved into a highly effective means of furthering peace around the world. At the same time, our world body has been recharged in its work of bringing the community of nations together in the pursuit of universal values and shared standards, brought under the broad rubric of democracy and the market economy.

Thirdly, globalization has come to affect every aspect of international life, with far-reaching implications for the work of the United Nations. As

States become more interdependent, as problems become more trans-border and global in nature, the issues brought to the United Nations continue to expand and diversify. In the process, we find ourselves dealing with both positive and negative aspects of globalization.

While enhancing the well-being of humankind in general, globalization also widens the gap between the haves and the have-nots within and between countries. Bridging the gap and making globalization work to the benefit of all is one important challenge to which the United Nations must rise.

The future of the United Nations depends on how the world body adapts and reforms itself to meet the new challenges in this changing world.

In the final weeks of our work for the main part of our session last December, we all were delighted and heartened by the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize jointly to the United Nations and to Secretary-General Kofi Annan. A number of United Nations agencies had received the prize before, but this was the first time that the United Nations as a whole was so honoured. As I stated at that time, the prize should be viewed as both a recognition of past achievements as well as a summons to move forward towards our goals with renewed energy and dedication. It represents the expectations of the peoples of the world for the United Nations to stand equal to the new challenges facing humankind.

We should not be complacent either about the achievements of the United Nations or its future role. To be sure, the Organization has its shortcomings. United Nations initiatives have not always been successful, nor have its successes always been permanent. Criticism of the United Nations, both fair and unfair, has been a staple of political debate since 1945. Some of the more constructive criticisms have served as useful bases for exploring ways to improve the work of the Organization.

For the longer term, we must ask ourselves how we see the world's only global organization developing in the coming decades. Will it develop into a kind of world government, or will it remain a forum for nation States? The answers do not come easily, and they will depend on fundamental philosophical questions about the nature of history, human societies and nation States.

In any case, being the optimist that I am, I believe that we must begin to explore these questions by placing greater hope in the United Nations. If we seek greater safety and well-being for humanity in general, there must be greater predictability and rule of law in international life. In this rapidly globalizing world, more numerous and diverse actors interact with one another on a constant basis. We should make these interactions more peaceful than violent, more cooperative than confrontational, more productive than wasteful. And at the centre of all of these efforts, we need the United Nations, the only universal body, doing more rather than less.

Now I believe that it is time for me to express my deepest appreciation to all who have helped and supported me in discharging my duties.

First of all, my sincere gratitude goes to all representatives of Member States for their active participation in the meetings and their guidance in conducting the business of the General Assembly. I wish also to thank the Vice-Presidents, who have kindly taken my place on many occasions, and the Chairpersons, Vice-Chairpersons and Rapporteurs of the Main Committees, who did excellent work despite numerous difficulties under unusual circumstances. I should like also to thank the Vice-Chairpersons of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform and all of those diplomats who worked with me as facilitators on several important issues, including revitalization of the General Assembly and conflict prevention.

My heartfelt appreciation goes to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his invaluable support and guidance. Under-Secretary-General Chen Jian and his dedicated staff of the Department for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, whose name will be changed to the Department for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Management, and my own office staff have consistently provided top-quality and professional assistance. I thank them. I am immensely grateful to them and to all of the members of the Secretariat, including the security officers and interpreters. Last but not least, I thank the Government and the people of my home country, the Republic of Korea. Whether as Foreign Minister or as a former minister, I have always enjoyed their unwavering support for the success of this presidency. Needless to say, there are many others not mentioned here to whom I am equally indebted.

Finally, I should like to offer my best wishes to my successor, President Jan Kavan. I am confident that under his able stewardship, the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly will achieve very fruitful results.

Agenda item 2 (*continued*)

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The President: We are now coming to the end of the fifty-sixth regular session of the General Assembly. May I invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

Closure of the fifty-sixth session

The President: I declare closed the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 3.50 p.m.